Show-Me

Literacy...

The "Official" Newsletter of Literacy in Missouri

THE GRADUATE
Nevada woman earns GED at age 77

A party was held in the Bushwhacker Museum to honor 77-year-old GED graduate Dorothy Collins. Left to right: Terry Ramsey, Dorothy Collins, Bill Thole and Sarah Claspill.

At 77 years old, Dorothy Collins was told she was the oldest person to receive her GED (General Educational Development/high school equivalent) diploma in Nevada. "I think the next oldest was 75," she said with a grin. A graduate of the GED program is recognized as having high school level academic skills.

Collins attended high school in Kansas and was a quarter of a point away from graduation when she dropped out of school. "Back then, in 1947, high school graduation didn't seem like a very important thing," she explained. "My mother was a widow and it seemed that the seniors in my class were always

either playing or spending money, and I didn't have the time or money to be so irresponsible."

She later married Olin D. Collins and was a homemaker until he became too ill to work. After his death, she, as the head of the house, didn't need a high school diploma to apply for LPN school. But she was told she had to have been unemployed 16 weeks to qualify for the program offered at that time.

"How could I be unemployed that long and support my family?" she asked. She decided school would have to wait a while. "I didn't think it would be 30 years though," she said with a chuckle.

Through the years she has worked

in the Cedar County Hospital and for a printing company. The pay wasn't too good. Her sister had discovered the Experience Works program and encouraged Collins to check into it. She did and discovered there were several jobs she might want to apply for, and felt she was qualified for. But all the jobs required a GED or high school diploma.

Experience Works is a federally funded program to help seniors gain skills to re-enter the job market. "We encourage employers to hire seniors," Bill Thole, Field

Graduate,

From the **State AEL Office**

A *WIN* for Workforce Development

ACT's WorkKeys assessment program and Worldwide Interactive Network's (WIN) Training component provide the total solution to America's skilled worker shortage.

The U.S. economy is robust and industry is expanding. New jobs are being created daily and unemployment is low. There is one major flaw in this otherwise bright scenario. There is a significant difference between the skills employers need and the skills available in the workforce.

For years, industry has challenged the education system to develop skills directly applicable to the work environment. New technology and innovations in industrial and service delivery processes have pushed the skill demand far beyond the supply. The *WIN* Instruction Solution (www.w-win.com) can increase the occupational skills of both current and prospective employees. It is the bridge to more opportunity for employees and productivity for industry. The *WIN* curriculum is directly aligned with the SCANS Report (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills) and the ACT WorkKeys system. ACT, an international leader in educational "assessment", introduced the WorkKeys system in the early 1990's.

The next phase of the ACT system is the assessment. Current or potential employees are assessed and measured against the skills required for the specific job. Employers now have the ability to identify skill matches and skill deficiencies. The employer has also developed a system with a common language for directing career development for employees. The *WIN* Instruction Solution provides the vital link to workforce and employee development by providing a series of 36 levels of competency-based instruction designed to meet the eight ACT WorkKeys skill areas. The instruction covers the areas of Listening, Observation, Reading for Information, Writing, Applied Mathematics, Applied Technology, Locating Information and Teamwork. Each skill area includes instruction of multiple skill levels and can be tailored to individual requirements. The instruction is designed for maximum flexibility. Learners can progress at their own pace at home or in the workplace, or the curriculum can be delivered by a facilitator in a more structured environment. *WIN* has also converted the *WIN* Instruction Solution to an online format that has recently been completed and is accessible via Internet and/or Intranet delivery.

"*WIN*'s response is what I have dreamed of from developers" Jerry Miller, Senior Consultant for ACT and one of the major architects of the ACT WorkKeys system said. "Strong supporting curriculum enables the WorkKeys system to be a total solution."

Dr. Teresa Chasteen, President of *WIN*, said educators can now have the opportunity to give business and industry what they really need by using WorkKeys as a common language tool for communication. "As a professor in higher education for several years, students would often ask me how a particular course was going to be used to their advantage for employment in the future. Sometimes I was at a loss for a clear answer. Today, with the *WIN* Instruction Solution, I'm delighted to be able to tell students and educators alike that these are in fact the true keys to workplace and career success".

WIN's curriculum applications are virtually unlimited. These applications include school-to-work, unemployment to work, career progression and career changes. Many companies have implemented the WorkKeys system and have quickly realized reduced employee turnover, increased employee satisfaction, and significant increases in productivity. Employers no longer are left to search for the right skills. They can now take cost-effective actions to address their needs and help bring our economy, businesses, schools and the public closer to improving the quality of life and increasing the success rates among today's ever-growing market.

This article was formally posted on WIN website on 5/20/03.

The WIN curriculum is now available to Missouri's Adult Education Programs. For more information contact your local program director.

Email Tips

This is how to send Blind Copies, when you have a group of email addresses you want to send an email out to, do the following: Get all the email addresses you are sending to into the "send to" window.

In front of the first address, put a parenthesis (and separate each address with a comma and one space. After the last address put the end parenthesis.)

That is all it takes. The receivers of your email message should not be able to see the email addresses of the other receivers of the email.

Using some addresses examples, it would look like this: (JPreul@ncmissouri.edu, XXXX@juno.net, YYY@yahoo.com, ZZZ@msn.com)

To, Cc and Bcc

With only three choices for addressing an e-mail, i.e. the 'To', 'Cc' and 'Bcc' fields, you would think addressing would be trouble free. Unfortunately, that's not the case.

First, there are the users who have no idea that the 'Cc' exists. Every address is listed in the 'To' even if the email is only directed to one person. In cases such as this the receivers have no clue as to who should take action so either they all do something or they all do nothing.

Secondly, there are users who feel that every single e-mail

should be copied to their entire address book whether it's relevant to those receiving it or not. These are the 'cry for attention' crowd.

Lastly, there are users who never read the names of the people who receive a copy of an e-mail. They are the 'Did you see this?' crowd. For example, person X sends an e-mail to persons A, B and C. C immediately forwards it to A and B with the question 'Did you see this?' not bothering to see that X already sent A and B copies.

In summary, here's a rough guide on how to populate the address fields:

The addresses in the 'To' are for the people you are directly addressing.
The addresses in the 'Cc' are for the people you are indirectly addressing. They are the FYI-ers or CYA-ers. Don't over do it here. Copy only those who need to be copied; not your entire universe of contacts.
The addresses in the 'Bcc' are like 'Cc' except that the addresses in 'To' and 'Cc' do not know that the addresses in the 'Bcc' are included in the conversation. The 'To' and 'Cc' addresses are blind to the 'Bcc' address. As you can imagine, use of the 'Bcc' is somewhat unethical and therefore its use is discouraged.

Reply To All

The 'Reply to All' button is just a button, but it can generate tons of unnecessary e-mails. For example, if I send a dozen people an e-mail asking if they are available at a certain time for a meeting I should get

a dozen replies and that's it. However, if each person hits the "Reply to All' button not only do I get a dozen replies, but so does everyone else for a total of 144 messages!

I'm not saying that the 'Reply to All' button should not be used. I'm saying that it should be used with care.

Why do you need email etiquette? A business needs to implement etiquette rules for the following three reasons:

▸ Professionalism: by using proper email language your company will convey a professional image.
▸ Efficiency: emails that get to the point are much more effective than poorly worded emails.
▸ Protection from liability: employee awareness of email risks will protect your company from costly law suits.

Watch next month for more tips on email etiquette.

Submitted by Jamy Preul

Additional PD Opportunities for AEL Teachers in the Month of March

The Missouri AEL Professional Development Center and the DESE AEL office have established additional professional development opportunities for AEL teachers and directors.

The LIFT-Missouri Program is offering a one day workshop on "*Adult Reading Research Training for Literacy Coordinators & AEL Teachers*". The workshop will be March 3rd from 10:00-3:00 at Webster University - Westport Campus Graybar Building, 11885 Lackland Road Suite 600.

This training focuses on the skills and strategies important to adult educators working in adult education classrooms. Specific focus is given to intentional and purposeful teaching strategies that impact ABE reading achievement and how strategies can be used to impact the reading achievement of adults. There will be special emphasis on moving research to practice by developing lesson plans and literacy activities for the classroom.

For more information on the workshop or to register, you can go to the LIFT-Missouri web site at http://www.lift-missouri.org/workshops/litcoord.html.

DESE AEL and the PDC is sponsoring a WIN (Worldwide Interactive Network) training on March 21st. The sessions will be held at the Missouri Technical Training Center, 1738 East Elm Street Jef-

ferson City. There will be two sessions, one from 9:00 - 11:30 a.m. and the second session will take place from 1:00 - 3:30 p.m. WIN is an online program that students can use to improve specific workplace skills. WIN is tied to the Work Keys assessment program used by Workforce Development Centers in Missouri.

On March 30th, there will be a GED Connections and Workforce Essential Skills training. The session will run from 8:00-5:00. GEDC and WES are multi media programs used to help students prepare for the GED test and improve on workplace skills.

Contact your local program director for specifics on any of the training sessions. If you are attending the trainings on March 21st or 30th, your program director will need to contact the state office for registration.

NCSALL Research for Adult ESOL Students

New research at the NCSALL-sponsored ESOL Lab School at Portland State University (www.labschool.pdx.edu) focuses on how beginning-level ESOL students acquire English as a second language. One focus of the research is about pair work, an instructional strategy in which the teacher gives the students a task to complete in

pairs. For example, a pair might take turns asking (and answering) each other questions about what they did when they got up in the morning, or practicing past tense verbs and vocabulary about activities in daily life.

The research about pair work indicates the following:

Adult ESOL students can work productively in pairs, even at beginning levels of instruction. In order to complete a task assigned by the teacher, students in pairs often must "negotiate" in order to complete the task: they strive, with each other, to communicate meaning, find the correct word, and determine the best way to complete the task.

"Negotiating meaning" appears to be an important element of language learning, favorable to second-language acquisition and not a negative element, as many teachers might see such back-and-forth attempts to be understood. When students have the freedom to "negotiate" the meaning and form of what they are saying to each other, this leads students to "notice" the specific areas of their language that need development. In the interactions with their partner, students discover what will "fix" the problem (pronunciation, meaning, etc.).

Student pairs will negotiate different aspects of the same pair

NCSALL,

The Roots and Wings of Adult Education

Pulitzer Prize-winning author Hodding Carter, Jr. once wrote, "There are two lasting bequests we can give our children: one is roots, the other is wings" (Health Today Online, n.d.). As important as these two seemingly unrelated concepts are for children, both are equally important for programs in adult education. If you look at the business side of adult education as the "roots" and the relationship side as the "wings," a total picture of a program emerges.

Administrators are often required to become masters of the numbers. Due to their need to manage and provide program data, they are often required to ask the questions that center the discussion on numerical issues. Whether it is the number of students served, the number of credit hours generated, or finding funding for a specific class, the focus of administrators must center on measurable data extracted from STAIRS (*ACES in Missouri*) and other program reports.

Other staff, especially instructors, may have less of a focus on the numbers and more on what they perceive as the individual needs of students. Due in part to the everyday interaction they have with students, instructors can feel that the individual student's needs and concerns get lost in the "numbers." While both administration and instructional or support staff have the best in mind for programs and students, they may evaluate things from vastly different perspectives. Without consideration and evaluation of both perspectives, the program will not fully excel.

Just as children need "roots and wings" to reach their potential, adult education programs need both as well. Placing an emphasis on the roots (business side) of adult education is as important as having a focus on the wings (relationship side) and vice versa. Numbers and data tell a story, but not the whole story, and examining numbers can often be reactive instead of proactive. While relationships are critically important, programs must also show results in the form of test gains and completions. With ever-increasing demands for programs to show continuous improvement, the roots of adult education must constantly be examined and reviewed. It is not enough to feel that a program is effective and helping students, it is also important to look at what the numbers say about the outcomes the program is achieving.

While it is imperative that programs use all available data as a tool to examine what should be emulated and what should be eliminated, to focus only on the roots without consideration of the wings will leave programs stagnant. It is critically important to recognize the symbiotic relationship between the roots and wings for the success of a program. Developing the wings of a program also can allow for a more proactive approach. This has serious implications for, and a significant impact on, the program's outcomes.

The roots of adult education can be examined by looking at the hard, measurable data. How many hours of training is staff receiving? How many students are enrolled in a program or at a specific site? What kinds of gains are students showing after 371/2 hours of instruction? What type of instruction does the data show is most effective and in what types of situations? How does instructor and staff training impact programs? The driving aim of these questions is to look at what types of actions can be taken to strengthen the roots of an adult education program. This business approach tries to eliminate the guesswork in order to deal with those aspects of the program that are measurable. The roots of the program are determined by the internal processes and systems used to collect, report, and respond to data. This is reflected in how well staff and instructors know the goals of their program and how their goals fit into the larger picture of adult education. The roots of a program impact, in part, the instructional methods used and the skill level and work loads of staff and instructors.

In the book Transfer of Training, Broad and Newstrom (1992) outline the critical importance of staff development for the improvement of programs and practices. They de-

Roots,
(cont. from page 5)

Numerous studies have shown that increased training and flexible employees add value to a program. Broad and Newstrom cite several different models of staff development that can play a crucial role in improving a program.

One such model is the individually guided model. This type refers to a process through which teachers and staff plan for and pursue activities that they believe will promote their own learning. This model requires a high level of engagement on the part of the staff. A staff member utilizing this model must be committed to self-assessment and reflection of their individual strengths and weaknesses.

Another model, the observation/assessment model, provides staff with objective data and feedback on their classroom performance. This is used to help tailor a training plan to build competencies and skills. Many teachers may not receive frequent feedback on their instructional methods and, therefore, may not see the benefit of this model; however, this model gives the staff person "another set of eyes" to help them see how they are performing with students. It benefits not only the staff person being observed, but also the person who serves as the observer. The process can function as a learning experience for both parties by allowing both the observer and the observed to understand

how each contributes to the overall success of the program. The connection between what goes on in the wings side of the equation directly impacts the strength of the roots. Without the proper attention and support of the wings, roots cannot grow deep and strong.

While training and staff development play a critical role in a program's success, the transfer of training to the environment determines the true usefulness to the student, the staff, and the program. It is important to note that training can only elaborate on what already exists; it cannot create new behavior for an environment that will not support it (Broad & Newstrom, 1992). Barriers to the transfer of training, such as lack of reinforcement on the job, a non-supportive organizational culture, or an environment resistant to change, all serve to negate the benefits that can be achieved through staff development. These barriers serve, in effect, as a dam that routes water away from the roots of the program, creating a drought wherein innovation and growth become impossible.

The wings, or relationship side, of adult education refers to those vital qualities of a program, often difficult to measure, but of critical importance for the program's success. It could be said that the wings of adult education determine how high a program can fly, and in order for the wings to be developed, programs have to look

at the relationships within a program. What is the relationship between students and instructors? Is the classroom safe, both in a psychological and physical sense? What type of environment does the student enter when they come to class for the first time? What are the specific needs and issues that a student brings to the classroom? Do the staff members understand cultural differences and take those into account when working with a student? What are the professional, working relationships among coworkers within the environment? Relationships also tell a story, but again, only part of the story. The development of a program's wings looks at several factors. Zohar (1990) asserts that adult learning is best achieved through dialogue. This approach looks at the importance of assessing the needs of the student and connecting what is to be taught with what the student wishes to learn. By doing this, one of the most important factors for developing the wings is addressed . . . respect.

Anecdotal reports as well as research have shown the importance of the student/teacher relationship. By assessing the needs of the student with the student, an immediate signal is sent that serves to open up dialogue between the student and the teacher. Freire and Horton (1990) note that the act of listening serves to increase motivation. It is the sense of being

"heard" that helps the student become a partner to the process rather than a bystander.

Zohar (1990) notes that beyond assessing needs and showing respect for students as decision makers, there are other practices that increase the dialogue needed for learning to take place. He also points to the need for clear roles and immediacy in the classroom. Zohar states that it is important for instructors to constantly reinforce the notion of human equity between teacher and student and among other students.

Often, the first hurdle for reaching students is overcoming preconceived notions they may have about the classroom, teachers, or their own ability to learn. When the wings of an adult education program are developed, the student can enter a classroom environment where they are able to begin to shed some of the negative ideas they may have held about education and themselves. Affirming is one of the basic tasks of every teacher (Zohar, 1990). Without this, students are likely to retreat when moving beyond their comfort zone. In addition to this, when students can see the immediate usefulness of new learning, they become more invested in what is being taught.

Various studies have looked at students labeled "at-risk" who go on to be successful in society. The power of teachers and the teaching relationship is evident when looking at the findings of those studies and anecdotal reports. These usually cite a teacher or other individual who refused to give up on them. Without specifically using the term coined by Carl Rogers, they often describe what he referred to as unconditional positive regard. This acceptance of the individual as a person without being judgmental is something students may have never experienced; however, it serves as a powerful tool to open and maintain dialogue by establishing mutual respect.

It is also crucial to examine how the atmosphere or relationships

> *"When the wings of an adult education program are developed, the student can enter a classroom environment where they are able to begin to shed some of the negative ideas they may have held about education and themselves".*

among team members aid in developing the wings of an adult education program. How well do staff members work through the inevitable disagreements that arise? How do staff members manage the stress associated with work? The professional relationships and environment at work can either promote creativity and productivity or hinder them. In order to build the wings of a program, it is important to create an environment where discussion and debate can occur.

If a program is to thrive, not just survive, both roots and wings must be developed. Neither can be ig-

nored or undervalued. Administrators must realize the importance of the wings and their part in the equation of determining how the roots develop. Instructors must realize the significance of focusing on the roots for ongoing program development. In order for programs to soar, the roots and wings must form a symbiotic relationship that should not be underestimated but, instead, should be understood, appreciated, and nurtured with the common goals of student success and continuous program improvement.

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This article was reprinted from the Excellence in Adult Education and Family Literacy Newsletter in conjunction with Illinois Community College Board, written by Jay Brooks, Adult Education and Literacy Director of Rend Lake College, and Bevan Gibson, Director of Southern Illinois Professional, Development Center.

Graduate,

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Coordinator, explained. "Seniors are the largest growing work force and display good work ethics and a willingness to learn." Part of the program includes finding out what employers need and helping trained senior workers fill those needs. "Experience Works helps train seniors in the skills needed to find well-paying jobs," Thole said. "Our goal is to get them trained, out of our program and working at good jobs."

While going to classes for her GED, Collins continued working part time as a docent in the Bushwhacker Museum and was paid by the Experience Works Program. They also funded her GED training. Terry Ramsey, Bushwhacker Museum Coordinator, said the program has been a real help to the museum. She said

"I am pleased I decided to do it and finished," she said. "I think the good Lord helped me through it."

she was please to have helped Dorothy through a flexible schedule while she was working and going to school.

"My two five-year-old great-grandsons couldn't believe I was going to school just like them," Collins said. Her family has been very encouraging and supportive

of her training and career choices. My daughter gave me this necklace for my graduation," Collins said, proudly showing off her necklace featuring a silver diploma. She admits the course was a difficult one, but she passed and she's now ready to check out the other jobs she's interested in applying for. "I am pleased I decided to do it and finished," she said. "I think the good Lord helped me through it." She hopes to continue her training to become a kindergarten assistant. Her advice to high school students? "Stay in school! Learn all you can, in books and through experience. You'll find a use for it in your work and in your life."

Sarah Claspill is the Experience Works Field Assistant in this area and can be reached at the Career Center by calling (417)448-1177. To apply, one has to be at least 55 years old. There are also income limitations to consider for qualification.

Written by Nancy Malcom, Nevada Herald-Tribune

MAELPDC Pre-Certification Workshops

- March 25-26
- May 20-21

NCSALL

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activity. Therefore, pair activities help students with their specific language needs. In other words, teachers can expect that students will learn the things.

For more information on the research on pair work, read "Same Activity, Different Focus" by Kathryn Harris in Focus on Basics, Volume 8, Issue A (November 2005) at www.ncsall.net/?id=988 *.*

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